NUMB. CCCCLI.

The SPECTATOR.

——— Jam ſævus apertam
In rabiem cæpit verti jocus, & per honeſtas
Ire minax impunè domos———

Thurſday, Auguſt 7. 1712.

THERE is nothing ſo ſcandalous to a Government, and deteſtable in the Eyes of all good Men, as Defamatory Papers and Pamphlets; but at the ſame time there is nothing ſo difficult to tame, as a Satyrical Author. An angry Writer, who can't appear in Print, naturally vents his Spleen in Libels and Lampoons. A fat old Woman, ſays the Fable, ſeeing all her Wrinkles repreſented in a large Looking-glaſs, threw it upon the Ground in a Paſſion, and broke it into a thouſand Pieces; but as ſhe was afterwards ſurveying the Fragments with a ſpiteful kind of Pleaſure, ſhe could not forbear uttering her ſelf in the following Soliloquy. What have I got by this revengeful Blow of mine, I have only multiplied my Deformity, and ſee an hundred ugly Faces, where before I ſaw but one.

It has been propoſed, *to oblige every Perſon that writes a Book, or a Paper, to ſwear himſelf the Author of it, and enter down in a Publick Regiſter his Name and Place of Abode.*

This, indeed, would have effectualy ſuppreſſed all printed Scandal, which generally appears under borrowed Names, or under none at all. But it is to be feared, that ſuch an Expedient would not only deſtroy Scandal, but Learning. It would operate promiſcuouſly, and root up the Corn and Tares, together. Not to mention ſome of the moſt Celebrated Works of Piety, which have proceeded from Anonymous Authors, who have made it their Merit to convey to us ſo great a Charity in ſecret. There are few Works of Genius that come out at firſt with the Author's Name. The Writer generally makes a Tryal of them in the World before he owns them; and, I believe, very few, who are capable of Writing, would ſet Pen to Paper, if they knew, before Hand, that they muſt not publiſh their Productions but on ſuch Conditions. For my own part, I muſt declare the Papers I preſent the Publick are like Fairy Favours, which ſhall laſt no longer than while the Author is concealed.

That which makes it particularly difficult to reſtrain theſe Sons of Calumny and Defamation is, that all Sides are equally guilty of it, and that every dirty Scribler is countenanced by great Names, whoſe Intereſts he propagates by ſuch vile and infamous Methods. I have never yet heard of a Miniſtry, who have inflicted an exemplary Puniſhment on an Author that has ſupported their Cauſe with Falſhood and Scandal, and treated, in a moſt cruel manner, the Names of thoſe who have been look'd upon as their Rivals and Antagoniſts. Would a Government ſet an everlaſting Mark of their Diſpleaſure upon one of thoſe infamous Writers, who makes his Court to them by tearing to Pieces the Reputation of a Competitor, we ſhould quickly ſee an End put to this Race of Vermin, that are a Scandal to Government, and a Reproach to Human Nature. Such a Proceeding would make a Miniſter of State ſhine in Hiſtory, and would fill all Mankind with a juſt Abhorrence of thoſe Perſons who ſhould treat him unworthily, and employ againſt him thoſe Arms which he ſcorn'd to make uſe of againſt his Enemies.

I cannot think that any one will be ſo unjuſt as to imagine what I have here ſaid, is ſpoken with a Reſpect to any Party or Faction. Every one who has in him the Sentiments either of a Chriſtian or a Gentleman, cannot but be highly offended at this wicked and ungenerous Practice which is ſo much in uſe among us at preſent, that it is become a kind of National Crime, which diſtinguiſhes us from all the Governments that lie about us. I cannot but look upon the fineſt Strokes of Satyr which are aimed at particular Perſons, and which are ſupported even with the Appearances of Truth, to be the Marks of an evil Mind, and highly Criminal in themſelves. Infamy, like other Puniſhments, is under the direction and diſtribution of the Magiſtrate, and not of any private Perſon. Accordingly we learn from a Fragment of *Cicero*, that tho' there are very few Capital Puniſhments in the twelve Tables, a Libel or Lampoon which took away the good Name of another, was to be puniſhed by Death. But this is far from being our Caſe. Our Satyr is nothing but Ribaldry, and *Billingſgate*. Scurrility paſſes for Wit; and he who can call Names in the greateſt Variety of Phraſes, is looked upon to have the ſhrewdeſt Pen. By this means the Honour of Families is ruin'd, the higheſt Poſts and greateſt Titles are rendered cheap and vile in the Sight of the People; the nobleſt Virtues, and moſt exalted Parts, expoſed to the Contempt of the Vicious and the Ignorant. Should a Foreigner, who knows nothing

of

of our private Factions, or one who is to act his part in the World, when our present Heats and Animosities are forgot, should, I say, such an one form to himself a Notion of the greatest Men of all Sides in the *British* Nation, who are now living, from the Characters which are given them in some or other of those abominable Writings which are daily Published among us, what a Nation of Monsters must we appear.

As this cruel Practice tends to the utter Subversion of all Truth and Humanity among us, it deserves the utmost Detestation and Discouragement of all who have either the Love of their Country, or the Honour of their Religion, at Heart. I would therefore earnestly recommend it to the Consideration of those who deal in these pernicious Arts of Writing; and of those who take pleasure in the Reading of them. As for the first, I have spoken of them in former Papers, and have not stuck to rank them with the Murderer and Assassin. Every honest Man sets as high a Value upon a good Name, as upon Life it self; and I cannot but think that those who privily assault the one, would destroy the other, might they do it with the same Secrecy and Impunity.

As for Persons who take Pleasure in the reading and dispersing of such detestable Libels, I am afraid they fall very little short of the Guilt of the first Composers. By a Law of the Emperors *Valentinian* and *Valens*, it was made Death for any Person not only to write a Libel, but if he met with one by chance, not to tear or burn it. But because I would not be thought singular in my Opinion of this matter, I shall conclude my Paper with the Words of Monsieur *Bayle*, who was a Man of great Freedom of Thought, as well as of exquisite Learning and Judgment.

'I cannot imagine, that a Man who disperses a 'Libel is less desirous of doing Mischief than the 'Author himself. But what shall we say of the 'Pleasure which a Man takes in the reading of a 'Defamatory Libel? Is it not an heinous Sin in 'the Sight of God? We must distinguish in this 'point. This Pleasure is either an agreeable Sensation 'we are affected with, when we meet with a witty 'Thought which is well expressed, or it is a Joy 'which we conceive from the Dishonour of the Person who is defamed. I will say nothing to the 'first of these Cases; for perhaps some would think 'that my Morality is not severe enough, if I should 'affirm that a Man is not Master of those agreeable 'Sensations, any more than of those occasioned by 'Sugar or Honey when they touch his Tongue; 'but as to the second, every one will own that Pleasure to be a heinous Sin. The Pleasure in the first 'case is of no continuance; it prevents our Reason 'and Reflection, and may be immediately follow'd 'by a secret Grief, to see our Neighbour's Honour 'blasted. If it does not cease immediately, it is a 'Sign that we are not displeased with the ill-nature 'of the Satyrist, but are glad to see him defame 'his Enemy by all kinds of Stories; and then we 'deserve the Punishment to which the Writer of the 'Libel is subject. I shall here add the Words of 'a Modern Author. *St.* Gregory *upon excommunicating those Writers who had dishonoured* Cassorius, '*does not except those who read their Works; because,* 'says he, *if Calumnies have always been the delight* 'of the Hearers, *and a gratification of those Persons* 'who have no other Advantage over *those* most Men, *is* 'not he who takes Pleasure in reading them as guilty 'as he who composed them? It is an uncontested 'Maxim, that they who approve an Action would 'certainly do it if they could; that is, if some reason of Self-love did not hinder them. There is 'no difference, says *Cicero*, between advising a 'Crime and approving it when committed. The 'Roman Law confirmed this Maxim, having subjected the Approvers and Authors of this Evil to 'the same Penalty. We may therefore conclude, 'that those who are pleased with reading Defamatory Libels, so far as to approve the Authors and 'Dispersers of them, are as guilty as if they had 'composed them; for if they do not write such 'Libels themselves, it is because they have not the 'Talent of Writing, or because they will run no 'Hazard.

The Author produces other Authorities to confirm his Judgment in this Particular.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

By her Majesty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, to Morrow being the 8th Instant, will be Reviv'd a Comedy call'd The London Cuckolds. Ramble by Mr. Mills, Townly Mr. Husband, Doodle Mr. Johnson, Wiseacre Mr. Bullock, Dashwell Mr Bowen, Lovelay Mr. Bullock jun. Arabella Mrs. Bradshaw, Peggy Miss Willis. With the last new Morris Dance, by Mr Norris, and others. By Her Majesty's Command, no Persons are to be admitted behind the Scenes.

This Day is Publish'd,

A Practical Exposition of the Beatitudes, in the first Part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount. By James Gardiner, M. A. Sub Dean of Lincoln. Also the Iliad of Homer, with Madam Dacier's Notes, Mr. Johnson's Grammatical Notes, and a large Poetical Index to the whole. In 5 Volumes, 12mo. with 26 Copper Plates; finely Printed on an Elziver Letter. Both Printed for Bernard Lintott, between the two Temple Gates in Fleet-street, of whom may be had Dr. Bentley's Horace, Translated into English.

THE Famous Water-Theatre of the late Ingenious Mr. Winstanly, will continue to be shown for 6 Days every Evening at 5 a-Clock, there is the greatest Curiosities in Water-Works, the like was never perform'd before by any; and this present Night will be added a Garland of Wheat playing of Water in a curious manner, and several other new things suitable to the Season; and Bacchus squeezing the purple Juice out of the Grapes; there is also the Artificial Bird that entertains the Spectators with seven sorts of Liquors both hot and cold; there will be shown the Sea Gods and Goddesses, Nymphs, Sea-maids and Satires, playing of Water, and Fire mingling with the Water, and two flying Boys with a flaming Torch, playing of Water out of the burning Flame. It is at the lower end of Pickadilly near Hide Park, and is known by the Wind-Mill on the Top of it. When this is left of Showing, his fam'd House at Littleberry in Essex will be opened, and shown in greater perfection than ever: and both are Shown for the Benefit of his Widow, and in her Possession.

The Vapours in Women infallibly Cured in an Instant, so as never to return again, by an admirable Chymical Secret, a few Drops of which takes off a Fit in a Moment, dispels Sadness, clears the Head, takes away all Swimming, Giddiness, Dimness of Sight, Flushings in the Face &c. to a Miracle, and most certainly prevents the Vapours returning again; for by Rooting out the very Cause it perfectly Cures as Hundreds have experienc'd: It also strengthens the Stomach and Bowels, and causes Liveliness and settled Health. Is sold only at Mrs. Osborn's, Toy shop, at the Rose and Crown under St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street, at 2 s. 6 d.

Stoughton's great Cordial Elixir to be taken 70 or 80 Drops in a Glass of Sherry, Mountain or Canary, Pear, Ale or Tea, hot, once or twice a Day, is the best one Medicine in the World to prevent this new Distemper which arises from an ill disposition of the Air, against which this is of excellent use, as hath been largely experienced at Sweden, the West Indies, &c. and such great Quantities taken to Sea, and sent by Merchants Abroad for the same and confirm, few now going to Sea, or a large Journey without it; when taken ill, in Mace Ale, &c. as the Bills direct, going to Bed and Sweat will fully answer. Prepar'd only by him at his Warehouse in Red Lion-street, Southwark, he having obtain'd her Majesty's most gracious Letters Patents for the sole making thereof; sold at many places in and about London; also at some one Bookseller, Shopkeeper, or Coffee-house, &c. in most Cities and great Towns in Europe at 1 s. a Bottle. He gives Notice, as desired that he hath got again the true Venice Treacle in Tin Pots, right as it came over.

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